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**A Great Document**

The judgments of the moment are frequently of but transitory value. Yet, reading President Wilson's message to Congress at the moment of its delivery, it seems one of the great documents of history, reaching in a new and yet in the original spirit those noble words of Lincoln, "With malice to none."

Certainly no document that Mr. Wilson has written since he took office has so completely expressed the decision of the American people as that message to Congress in which the President last night set forth the case of the American democracy, of democracy the world over, against that German autocracy which has borrowed the name as it has adopted the character of Prussianism.

If anything were needed to give to the President's indictment a final force it was the fact that coincident with his address there arrived the news of the murder of more Americans and the sinking of one more American ship. The fact of war has long been before us; it needed only the words of the President of the United States, long withheld, to establish clearly in the minds of the least thoughtful that peace with Germany, as it is at present organized, was impossible.

It would be difficult to improve upon Mr. Wilson's indictment of the German assault, not upon American lives alone, but, as he properly and justly pointed out, upon mankind. It is, as he said, a "warfare upon mankind" that Germany is making and that Germany which is making it is, in fact, an "outlaw."

Those who most regret that the President has so long delayed his declaration will be the first to recognize that, having come to the point, he has drawn an indictment which will remain fixed in the minds of his own people and will be welcomed and properly acclaimed by those nations and by those peoples which have long carried forward the bitter struggle with the German menace at close range.

No man can exaggerate the moral effect in Europe to-day of President Wilson's word. The last great neutral nation, the last great civilized people, having long observed the progress of the world war with earnest desire to avoid the conflict, has at last proclaimed through its Chief Executive that peace with a German spirit in the world is impossible.

To-day the news of America's decision will be passed from mouth to mouth along that firing line in France which is the present frontier of civilization. Those who saved democracy at the Marne and Verdun, those who halted the German flood at Ypres and the Somme, will find new encouragement for their bitter task in the news that one more great free people has joined in the common resistance to a common peril.

Nor shall one overestimate the meaning to a Russian people, newly freed from its chains, of the announcement that the oldest of great republics has taken its stand beside the youngest.

And to-morrow may it not be that to words there will be joined acts and American soldiers will take their place beside the other soldiers of liberty? For not the least admirable of the President's declarations is that which calls for universal service, for that training of the manhood of America which will enable the nation to perform its share in the great task of liberating mankind from the German menace. Not less admirable are those suggestions outlining the future cooperation of this country with those already enlisted in the great struggle.

No praise can be too high for the words and the purposes of the President. Never in all the long period in which he has directed American policy has he seemed to come nearer to the ideal of the American people, the ideal of a President who should lead, not one who watchfully awaited the decision of a people who themselves asked for light.

We are done with many illusions, some

of which we have all shared, some of which have been due mainly to Mr. Wilson's own mistaken view of the facts of the European conflict. We are done with the doctrine of "too proud to fight." We have laid aside the futility of mediation. We have finally laid the ghost of "armed neutrality."

We have dismissed all the policies which were but phrases and the phrases which were but words. We have at last recognized as a nation that there can be no compromise with murder and no paltering with assassination, even when assassination flies a flag and claims the character of a civilized nation.

All over the world there will be Americans to-day who will find in the decision made yesterday by the President a cause for new confidence and new hope. After all, despite temporary weakness, momentary faltering, the American people have not proven false to their history or betrayed their tradition.

President Wilson has spoken eloquently; he has spoken truly; he has drawn an indictment which will follow the Prussian autocracy to its grave. Through him the United States has answered "present" at the rollcall of the peoples who love liberty and are willing to defend humanity and civilization against force and terror. We have closed a long and blotted page of national history. What always should have been done is at last to be done rightly.

**The Blundering Volunteer System**

The Tribune has repeatedly exposed the wastefulness and inefficiency of the volunteer system of military service. It is a system which fails to make an intelligent and economic use of the military material at a country's command. It discriminates in favor of the slackers and the disaffected, and makes harder the government's task of keeping order at home and getting the work out of the non-fighting population which that population ought to do.

We are glad to print an apt letter on this subject, received from the Rev. William Norman Guthrie, of the Church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery. Mr. Guthrie says:

There seems to be much confusion of thought in regard to what really is the democratic plan for national defense. We are constantly told that the "volunteer system" is that plan; in spite of its disastrous failure in England, where it resulted in sending to the front, massed together, the most eager, the most enthusiastically patriotic men of the nation, who would have, of course, been distributed among the millions who later answered the call of their country, either as officers or, at all events, individual maintainers of a beneficent patriotic campaign.

The volunteer system in America would mean, for instance, at this present moment, the draining out of our West from St. Louis to Duluth of those young men who do not consider Germany first or Germany at all, but only and altogether the defense of our ideals and principles as a free nation. Clearly, the volunteer system is a relic of a past age, a relic of a time when the millions strong, in Turnverein and Sängervereine, to vote according to their opinions and control the situation. Would this seem fair, or safe?

Again, only a universal service plan will reach fairly the whole population in our metropolis. Why should the great crowd of foreign-born or poorly Americanized be left without the wholesome experience of patriotic discipline? Why should, on the other hand, the element who remain behind, reputedly millions strong, in Turnverein and Sängervereine, to vote according to their opinions and control the situation. Would this seem fair, or safe?

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To resort to volunteering now would only mean repeating Britain's recent blunders and the blunders of all our previous wars.

**Our Way Station**

Now that eager travellers between Boston and Washington can make the trip over the new connecting railroad and scarcely hesitate in New York City, ours is the privilege of experimenting with the sensation long familiar to way stations and tank towns the world over. It was in Erie, Pennsylvania, many years ago, that a similar episode bestirred riot and bloodshed, we seem to recall. That town had always possessed a railroad of entrance and a railroad of exit, with separate stations, furnishing besides inconvenience to travellers much revenue to the citizens of Erie. So when Progress in her triumphal march across the continent started to unite these two railroads with tracks and ties, that through trains might pass that way, the sturdy citizens arose in their might and protested. They protested in vain, but the epic of the way station was enacted for all time on the streets of Erie.

The first Federal Express has now travelled over the Hell Gate span and under Manhattan and no protest has arisen. New Yorkers evidently purpose to take their Progress calmly. Undoubtedly, as a matter of fact, we should be thankful to escape the transshipment of these travellers. Being nothing but a tank town has its gloomy side, but being a national terminus has its disadvantages, too. If ever a city was overrun by travellers, beyond its capacity to care for them, that city is New York. It is delightfully emblematic of America that her metropolis should be more of a caravansary than a city, but it

is hard on the city. In the end, too, it is hard on all the ideas and ideals for which that city ought to stand.

Let us be properly grateful that after many years during which all roads led to New York at last one runs through it.

**The Virgin Islands**

There has been some disposition to contrast the strategic value of the Virgin Islands (until within a week the Danish West Indies) with their commercial worthlessness. Now that Uncle Sam has paid his \$25,000,000 and run up his flag on his new possessions, one is impressed with the old American tendency to shake the head over the business—a necessary purchase, but a poor bargain, with harbors that need dredging, natives who lack "pep" and agricultural prospects which are restricted by the mountainous character of the terrain.

Aside from the historic fact that America has never yet acquired any of its territory for its commercial importance, this attitude toward our new possessions is silly, unimaginative and lacking in perspective. Of what value to this country, already smothered in riches, would the commercial importance of these islands be, provided they had any? About the same as that of an extra \$1,000 to John D. Rockefeller. We should be far more concerned to find them picturesque, as they undoubtedly are; to find their natives leisurely and graceful and unsophisticated, as a foil to our own grotesque strenuousness and materialism, and to prove their silken air and perpetual sunshine an antidote to the raw winters of our "temperate" zone.

We can, if we will, make the Virgin Islands a playground like Bermuda, but under the Stars and Stripes. By permitting the natives a proper share in their development we might even escape the tragedy of a Palm Beach and establish here in the blue Caribbean a real haven of rest and recreation, worth more to us than the commercial importance of an India.

Incidentally, we have had this same opportunity in Porto Rico for many years and have neglected it. It is only in business that Americans are pioneers, never in the search for pleasure and refreshment, and Porto Rico is out of the beaten path. So are the Virgin Islands. But possibly now that we have grouped within fifty miles' radius such a considerable colonial interest as all these islands represent we may be induced to give both Porto Rico and our newest possessions more of the attention which, as potentially ideal winter resorts, they deserve.

**Why Not?**

In recent days two violent tornadoes have visited the Middle West, and each left behind a trail of ruthless destruction and death. There is danger that such storms may become more frequent and general before spring is over. No one may predict what disasters await the country unless all the advocates of calm weather exert their influence to prevent these things. Those who love our country and do not wish to see it plunged into a season of storm and flood should organize at once. All who do not believe in tornadoes must act before it is too late. Even a day's delay may be dangerous.

An Emergency Anti-Tornado Society must be organized. Meetings should be held, speeches made denouncing storms, resolutions adopted begging the atmosphere to keep cool. Telegrams should be sent to Congress and to the President showing that public sentiment does not approve of tornadoes, advising the authorities that no action be taken at this time. Let the slogan be, "We Want Calm." The day of cyclones is past; they are relics of barbarism. Down with the Weather Bureau and all excitable persons who predict atmospheric disturbance! Let us have a referendum on the tornado question.

Above all, there must be no practical measures of protection—no cyclone cellars, no strengthening of levees, no wind insurance. All such preparedness is only a compromise with evil. It is a conspiracy of greedy capitalists who wish to make money selling tornado insurance. The experience of other countries proves that such preparedness never turned a single tornado from its path. Appeal must be made from blind force to ideas. Oratory alone governs the powers of nature. What if the sky is darkening—what if the winds do howl? Liberty-loving Americans must stand firm. This is a test of our optimism. Americans must prove to all the world that they do not believe in tornadoes, and so hasten the season of eternal sunshine.

**Patriotic Indiana**

Indiana's showing in the latest recruiting lists, compiled by the War Department, is gratifying. Figures for the entire country show that the state's four recruiting stations stood among the first twenty in percentage of recruits to population. Fort Wayne led the nation, Indianapolis was fourth, Terre Haute seventh, Evansville twentieth. Indiana is thus placed at the head of the states in concrete evidences of patriotism. Talk is easy, but enlistment shows willingness for sacrifice; it is final proof that the heart is with the tongue. In the East there has been much talk of preparedness and patriotism, and some disposition to revile the comparative calmness of the Middle West, safe from menace of aircraft or battleship. No one seriously doubted the patriotism of the interior sections, which has been shown often enough, but there was some feeling that they had not been aroused to the gravity of the issues. All doubts of this character are dispelled by the recruiting figures, which show that—as far as Indiana is typical—there is no lack of patriotism in the Middle West or failure to understand the issues. The absence of evidences of excitement in the streets and in the conversation of citizens has also served as reason for criticism of the spirit of the people. Some have expressed doubt as to whether a call to arms, in the face of all that has been borne, would promptly bring the desired response. The enlistments at the first sign of a chance for service indicate that when the time comes Indiana will stand ready to perform her duty to the full.

**One Way to Help**

Write or Wire Your Representatives,  
Urging Universal Training

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: We know that your paper has advocated universal training, and as the Administration has invited and would welcome an expression of opinion from the country on this vital question, we appeal to you to request your readers who believe in universal training to write or wire at once to the President, their Senators and Congressmen, urging the enactment of a universal military training law.

We have made a canvass of a large part of the newspapers in this country and find that over five hundred favor universal training. We have replies, also, from 284 Mayors in cities representing a population of over nineteen million, stating that they are personally in favor of universal training.

If those who know the importance of this measure will at this time make a personal effort to impress their views upon our Executive and our legislators, who are really anxious to hear from them, we believe that the fight can be won.

We respectfully submit to you that this course will prevent a repetition of the errors of the past and create a lasting spirit for efficient national service.

JOSEPH H. CHOATE,  
Honorary President National Security League.  
ALTON B. PARKER,  
Honorary Vice-President.  
ROBERT BACON,  
President.  
S. STANWOOD MENKEN,  
Chairman Executive Committee.  
New York, March 29, 1917.

**Force Alone Can Save**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The systematized, inhuman and premeditated horror of Germany's course makes any peace in Europe under present conditions unthinkable, for it not alone would be "peace without victory," but as well peace without honor and without hope for the future.

It has come to pass that the hope of future freedom for mankind rests largely on America; on an America that is not only woefully but "wilfully" unprepared. On what hope for the future does America itself ground its faith?

It can never rest its faith on those now in control of public affairs in the United States, for the weak and continued procrastination and indecision of these men not only spell mortal peril for that future, but directly hold the German cause, a cause that finds its greatest justification in the wanton starving of innocent children; in the utter moral degradation of the mothers, daughters, sisters and wives; in a choice between death or slavery for the fathers, sons, brothers and husbands of those so hopelessly unfortunate as to have to carry the dreadful yoke of the Hun.

The wretched inhabitants of Northern France, Belgium, Serbia, Rumania and Polish Russia know to the uttermost depths of sorrow that no good in this world has ever been done that is not accomplished by Teuton force, or can ever be accomplished by Teuton force. Does America owe mankind no other duty than that of the lip? Are we forever to accept compromise for performance?

Force alone will save us from force, and we can only achieve the full measure of our strength by complete preparedness.  
JAMES G. BLAINE,  
San Francisco, Cal., March 28, 1917.

**Thirsting for Blood**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: The Tribune printed a few weeks ago President Wilson's very eloquent appeal to the belligerent nations to content themselves with a "peace without victory." Later, we were assured that the "armed ship" measure was not a war measure. Our ships have gone over safely, and this end is accomplished. War is not yet declared, nor is there more reason for it than when President Wilson penned his famous "peace" message.

Yet any who dare to speak as our President spoke a few weeks ago, of there being another method than war for settling international differences, is called a traitor, fined in our courts as a malefactor. Freedom of the press we have lost; freedom of speech is following. Our teachers are suspended for daring to speak against a war which has not yet been declared.

Is this America? Where, then, is freedom? Where is justice? How long since has it been a crime to believe in arbitration?

And how is it, by the way, that our city officials are not looking into the dangerous activities of the New York Bible Society—whose aim and object is the dissemination of pacifist literature? Why not bar the New Testament from book shops and shut up all the churches and quinine the clergymen, who, if they have not forsworn their allegiance to the Nazarene and engaged in the worship of Mammon, must be occupied with the same wickedness? Why not deport the members of the Society of Friends, as well as punishing teachers for holding the out-of-fashion doctrine of an appeal to reason instead of force?  
FRANCES DUNCAN,  
New York, March 30, 1917.

**Brother Bandits**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: So many astounding things are coming to pass these days that many delicious morsels are likely to escape us. But do point out to your readers the exquisite tid-bit in dear Herr Zimmermann's latest love-speech in which he explains why Mexico was selected to be "sucked" on us. Not only because they were our neighbors—surely a sufficient reason in itself—but because "the Mexicans, moreover, are known as good and efficient soldiers."

Is not this a beautiful illustration of the truism that "Birds of a feather flock together"? Have not the Mexicans, by roasting non-combatants in railway trains, attacking peaceful towns, slaughtering women and children and qualifying in the bandit class generally, fully earned the commendation of the statesmen of "Kultur"?

PHILIP COMSTOCK,  
New York, March 31, 1917.

**Not Backing Wedekind**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I find the name of the American Social Hygiene Association included in the list of "co-workers" appearing on the programme of Wedekind's "The Awakening of Spring," presented in a theatre in this city on March 20, under the auspices of the "Medical Review of Reviews." May I say in behalf of the association that this use of its name is unauthorized. The association in January last, by action of its executive committee, declined to endorse the production of the play.

JAMES H. FOSTER,  
Assistant Secretary the American Social Hygiene Association.  
New York, March 31, 1917.

**America's Day**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: Let us hope that on the Day every one in Washington will do his duty. Let us pray that on the Day also a glorious page will be added to the history of the American flag, of those forty-eight beautiful stars framed of red, white and blue.

HENRI DE LAFITOLE,  
New York, March 31, 1917.



**Wave, Flag of Freedom, Wave!**

By Bishop Luther B. Wilson, LL.D.

Wave, flag of freedom, wave! While all the winds that blow—  
Rude winds that ride the furious billows, or gentle winds that come  
From loveliness with orchards blossoming and gardens beautiful—while all the winds  
Tell to thee that weary men are praying and heartsick women,  
That homeless folk long piteously for home;  
Or while the winds come freighted  
With the whispered hopes of those  
Who trembling under the cruel hand of unsated power yet dare to hope—  
So long as weary hearts shall turn to thee with yearning, and thou shalt send to them  
Thy cheer, thy gospel of the equal chance, the pledge of chivalrous power  
To weakness everywhere—so long as thou shalt claim  
The redeemer's part in the sublime adventure of succoring  
The needy—Wave, flag of freedom, wave!

But if the day shall come when with conscienceless wealth or sullen poverty or brag-  
gart might  
Or cringing cowardice, we should forget the good old days,  
Or bodies satisfied should outlive the soul's unselfish passion  
Or strength should reckon as its compelling task the guardianship  
Of self, or on land the fainting should cry unheard,  
Or on sea the sinking should stretch forth pitiful hand unseen,  
Or if the winds which bring appeal should wait and wait  
And then go back to say, "There is no flutter of its folds,  
It does not see, it does not hear, we searched  
But could not feel one heart-throb." Or if the winds that bring  
The cry from any land should carry back the message—  
"Yes, the fluttering of the folds declared the old flag heard, but still there was  
No bending of the staff, no tugging at the halyards, as though it struggled to bring  
answer."  
Should there come an hour when the face of Washington would sadly turn away,  
Or Lincoln's great heart break again—if anguish such as that can come to the  
immortals—

If ever there should come a day when crimson stood for shame and not for sacrifice,  
When white betokened pallid indecision rather than radiant righteousness,  
Or blue seemed more the sign of fear than truth,  
Or if the stars upon the field so far forgot the burden of Key's ancient song,  
So lost the flashing splendor of great heartedness  
That all the blazing stars of heaven among which the immortals dwell  
Should look upon the stars for which the immortals strove,  
Despising them, counting their very presence an offence—  
If such a day should come—ah, then! ah, then!  
But, oh, it must not be. Nor wealth, nor poverty,  
Nor pride, nor fear, nor glamour of allurements, nor shadow of discouragement,  
Nor vagarious dream confusing statecraft,  
Nor the delusive cry, "All's well!" even as the lookout sights  
Tumultuous breakers with the jagged rocks ahead,  
Nor the bewildering message of false prophets, who smile and cannot frown,  
Who never knew the majesty of sinless wrath,  
And greet with equal warmth the false and true;  
The prophets who discern no sceptre, who ne'er have looked upon the great white  
throne—

Nor one nor all must blind thee to high destiny  
Nor rob thee of the glory consummate, the glory of guiding the storm-tossed, home,  
The glory of unmeasured wrath against foul wrong,  
The glory of uncalculating sacrifice for all men's good  
Such be thy glory—  
The glory of the pure and true, who rather  
Than live on and on and on, with cowardly endurance of dishonor,  
Or with mere mumbling protest feeble and soon forgot—  
Would hazard all and gladly welcome death, if so must be,  
With hands unstained would beckon death;  
Would laugh at death with that fine scorn which only hearts courageous know.

O, flag of freedom, with thy promise of new dwelling place for men,  
Vaster than the old, and statelier,  
Wave until the fluttering flags of all the nations signal thee  
That brotherhood at last holds sway,  
That love and equal laws and peace dwell everywhere  
Seeking the blessing of the God of hosts.  
May all thy sons e'en though in speech or memory  
Fond trace of far off lands remain—  
May all thy sons when'er the cause shall come  
Rise to defend thee,  
Swearing their love, their fortunes and their lives for thee.  
Wave for a thousand years,  
O flag of freedom, wave!

**Prepare**

And Heaven Save Us Until We Are  
Ready to Save Ourselves

To the Editor of The Tribune.  
Sir: Why all this uncertainty as to the need of preparation for defence in any case and war in all probability? If we had been preparing for fifty years there would still be much to do, and we have been sitting idly for two years behind the bulwark of France, England and the Atlantic Ocean.

Do our people realize that if the Central Powers do break through it will be a war of unspeakable ruthlessness, in which we must save our last shots for our woman-kind? Others have fought the battle to this time, but it is a battle that must be won at any cost or our system will be engulfed.

It is our right. It is to preserve the freedom, the small state, the Monroe Doctrine, so to speak, of Europe, of the world. Every spark of patriotism in us sends us to the aid of the thin red line of heroes that is preserving the shreds of Belgium, the Liberte, Egalite and Fraternite of France, literally the firesides of this earth.

We have sat supinely behind their agony too long. We have not even prepared to prepare. The spectacle of a Roman Senate allowing in dignified pacifism their several throats to be cut as they sit in formal assembly is not for us. We must arouse.

We have a foe with the ingenuity and determination of an Edison and the craft and heart of a Sioux, and we can possibly send 50,000 or 100,000 troops against him. We must protect those 50,000 or 100,000 to our last resource, and the best way to do it is to send two million more right with them. Our preparation is late, but make it complete, and heaven spare us till then!

GEORGE N. COLE  
New York, April 1, 1917.

**A Call for the Willing**

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: There are a great number of men to-day who have served in the regular army or National Guard who should be on the lists as officers in the reserve corps or on a National Guard reserve list. With most of them it is a lack of initiative, as many of them could be holding commissions to-day if they only had wished it. Wake them up!

Even though the faults of the National Guard are as so many have stated, yet it is to-day part of the first line of defence; it was the force called to the aid of the regular establishment, and even now, as I write, it is being called into service again. It is an organized force, commanded by officers with much experience. Let those men who feel the call join now.

The traditions of the Guard are those of self-sacrificing duty, and many feel that through the years the patriotic spirit of the country has been kept alive by them, and that even the regular army owes much to its support among civilians.

The Washington Greys won their title through being the President's escort at the inauguration of George Washington; they linked in history two days before the Revolution. They saw service at Fort Gansevoort in 1812; Fort Greene, 1812; Washington, 1861; Bull Run, 1861; Yorktown, 1862; Gettysburg campaign, 1863; Spanish-American War, 1898, and are ready for 1917. As the 8th Regiment they were called into state service twelve times in time of need.

Now, as the 8th Coast Defence Guard, they will man some of the seacoast artillery to defend the country. Men are needed to bring the ranks up to war strength, men of brawn who can stand the strain of heavy work at the guns, men of keen eyes for observation, men with live brains for the plotting room and the power house.

The 26th Company, which I have the honor to command, is one with continuous service. It has always been one of the first to respond to call. We are ready; will you join us? Come to Ninety-fourth Street and Park Avenue Wednesday or Friday evening, or at the call. SAMUEL T. STEWART,  
Captain New York Coast Artillery N. G.  
New York, March 28, 1917.